Children's Hospital of Philadelphia PolicyLab

Young Children's Development and Behavior: Associations with Timing of Household Food Insecurity in a Racially and Ethnically Diverse Early Head Start Sample

Visit Article

The objective of this study was to assess the impact of household food insecurity (HFI) over time on behavioral and developmental health in early childhood while considering the impact of timing/persistence of HFI and potential differences among racially or ethnically minoritized children. Families from the Early Head Start Family and Child Experiences Study (N = 760) were followed longitudinally until age 3 years. Caregiver interview data were collected on HFI, problem behaviors (PBs), delays in development (DD), and sociodemographic information. Analysis of Covariances examined differences between persistent vs transient HFI. Multiple regressions examined the impact of HFI on PB and DD and whether this relation was stronger in racially or ethnically minoritized children. The timing of HFI differentially affected PB, such that those with persistent HFI demonstrated greater PB than those with only early or only late HFI. A different pattern was identified for DD, in which those with late HFI had more DD than those with persistent HFI. Over and above other sociodemographics, including maternal risk factors and an income-to-needs ratio, HFI was associated with greater PB for children of all races and ethnicities. HFI was associated with more DD in non-Latino/a/e/x White families compared with non-Latino/a/e/x Black and Latino/a/e/x families. Meaningful differences were found in how the persistence/timing of HFI is differentially associated with PB and DD. In addition, while controlling for socioeconomic risk, a cumulative risk effect was not observed in how HFI affected racially or ethnically minoritized children.

Journal:

Journal of Developmental & Behavioral Pediatrics
Authors: Wanjik? F.M. Njoroge